

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 155157
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MANILA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 155157

FOR STULL FROM OAKLEY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PSDC

SUBJECT: U.S. IN EAST ASIA

REFS: MANILA 10210 AND 10211

1. GIVEN THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR EMBASSIES IN OTHER ASEAN MEMBER STATES, WE BELIEVE THAT A CAUTIOUS WORD OF GREETING FROM PRESIDENT CARTER FOR ASEAN WOULD BE USEFUL AND HAVE SO RECOMMENDED TO THE WHITE HOUSE. THE ASEAN EFFORT TO HAVE A SUMMIT MEETING WITH JAPAN, AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND AND THEIR DESIRE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE U.S. INDICATES DECREASED SENSITIVITY TO RADICAL CHARGES OF ASSOCIATION WITH "IMPERIALIST" POWERS. AT THE SAME TIME, WE APPRECIATE AND AGREE WITH THE THRUST OF YOUR THOUGHT THAT THE U.S. SHOULD NOT SMOTHER OR EMBARRASS ASEAN WITH AN OVERLY-CLOSE EMBRACE.

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2. THE SAME LINE OF THOUGHT APPLIES TO YOUR SUGGESTION ABOUT LESS RHETORIC. WE HAVE CONSIDERED IT IMPORTANT TO TRY AND STEM INITIAL PRIVATE AND PUBLIC CONCERN IN NON-COMMUNIST ASIAN COUNTRIES THAT U.S. MIGHT BE FOLDING ITS TENT AND STEALING AWAY, LEAVING IT TO JAPAN OR COMMUNIST POWERS TO FILL ANY VACUUM LEFT BY OUR DEPARTURE. DURING EARLY MONTHS OF ADMINISTRATION

THERE WAS LITTLE ELSE WE COULD DO WITH PUBLIC IMPACT THAN AN OCCASIONAL SPEECH OR STATEMENT; VISITS OF HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS, NAVAL UNITS, ETC. NOW THAT INITIAL CONCERN SEEMS TO HAVE SUBSIDED, WE HAVE DEVELOPED CLOSER RELATIONS AND BETTER UNDERSTANDING WITH LEADERS OF NON-COMMUNIST ASIA, AND WE HAVE GOTTEN OVER PERIOD OF PEAK CONGRESSIONAL CRITICISM OF OUR PROGRAMS IN THESE COUNTRIES, THERE MAY BE LESS NEED FOR RHETORIC.

3. SO FAR AS PHILIPPINES IS CONCERNED, WE HAD THOUGHT THAT ACTIONS SUCH AS CONGRESSIONAL CUT IN MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ABSENCE OF NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR, REFUSAL TO BE HURRIED INTO DISCUSSIONS ON BASE MATTERS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM--AS WELL AS WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM KOREA--HAD CREATED SITUATION WHERE MARCOS IS NOT TAKING U.S. FOR GRANTED (AS HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN DURING 1976). IF YOU HAVE OTHER INDICATIONS, PLEASE LET US KNOW. CERTAINLY THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY OTHER NON-COMMUNIST ASIAN STATE IS TAKING US FOR GRANTED OR SUGGESTING THAT WE SOMEHOW "UP THE ANTE" FOR ALLOWING US TO STAY. CHRISTOPHER

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